

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SAN JO 01358 162336Z

12

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 162317Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3224

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 1358

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CS, PN, US

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR MEETING ON PANAMA CANAL

FOR ASST SECRETARY ROGERS FROM TODMAN

1. PRESIDENT ODUBER JUST TOLD ME THAT HE WILL BE MAKING BRIEF STOP-OVER IN UNITED STATES ON SUNDAY, MARCH 28, EN ROUTE TO ISRAEL AND WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO YOU DURING THAT TIME IF CONVENIENT. HE SUGGESTED MEETING COULD BE EITHER IN NEW YORK AT KENNEDY AIRPORT, OR IN MIAMI AS YOU PREFER. HE ASKED THAT I ADVISE HIM SOONEST OF YOUR PREFERENCE SO THAT HE CAN PLAN ACCORDINGLY.

2. ODUBER SAID PURPOSE OF REQUESTED MEETING IS TO FILL YOU IN ON DETAILS OF HIS RECENT CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL TORRIJOS. ODUBER TOLD ME IN "STRICTEST CONFIDENCE" THAT TORRIJOS HAS DECIDED TO ANNOUNCE POSTPONEMENT OF PROPOSED MEETING OF LATIN AMERICAN CHIEFS OF STATE MAINLY TO AVOID HAVING CASTRO THERE. TORRIJOS WOULD LIKE TO BILL POSTPONEMENT AS A CONCILIATORY GESTURE TO U.S. NOT TO CREATE EMBARRASSMENT ON SITUATION WHICH MIGHT BRING ADDITIONAL PRESSURES TO BEAR ON SETTLEMENT OF CANAL PROBLEM. TORRIJOS IS PLEASED WITH PROGRESS OF NEGOTIATIONS AND POSITIVE USG ATTITUDE AND HE HOPES THAT FOLLOWING U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, THE PRESIDENT COULD GO TO PANAMA TO SIGN NEW CANAL TREATY IN PRESENCE OF SELECTED NUMBER OF LATIN AMERICAN PRESIDENTS WHO WOULD BE INVITED FOR OCCASION.

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MEETING COULD THEN BE BILLED AS JOINT CELEBRATION OF BOTH U.S.

BICENTENNIAL AND 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF "BOLIVAR CONFERENCE,"
THE FIRST PAN-AMERICAN MEETING HELD IN PANAMA.

3. ODUBER REPEATEDLY STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF THIS IDEA
BEING HELD IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE SO THAT TORRIJOS CAN GET
CREDIT FOR SURPRISE ANNOUNCEMENT WHEN IT IS MADE.

4. PLEASE ADVISE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR SEEING ODUBER. TODMAN

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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